



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

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CONTACT: Stephen Hourahan
202-224-6167

CHAFEE ANNOUNCES TWO NEWPORT LOCATIONS ARE NAMED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Chateau-sur-Mer and Marble House Added by Secretary Gale Norton

NEWPORT, R.I. – Today, **U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI)** stood with leaders of the Newport historic preservation community and announced that two Newport historic sites, Chateau-sur-Mer and Marble House, have been recognized as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) by Department of Interior Secretary Gale Norton. Chafee's announcement took place on the steps of the elegant Chateau-sur-Mer, where he was joined by Trudy Coxe, President of the Preservation Society of Newport County, Sister Therese Antone, President of Salve Regina University, and local officials. The revered architecture which has made the 1850's Chateau famous provided the perfect background for the Senator's comments.

"This is exceptional news for Newport and the people of Rhode Island. Placing these two historic sites on the list of National Historic Landmarks will push them into the national spotlight, which will strengthen regional heritage tourism, improve the local economy, and create more jobs. In addition, this national designation will make available some of the resources of the federal government for upkeep, maintenance, and reconditioning," Senator Chafee said.

NHLs are historic places of national significance designated by the Secretary of the Interior because of their "exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States." With this recognition, these two historic locations join a group of fewer than 2,500 places which bear this national distinction. Chafee worked with the Department of the Interior to secure this recognition, and was the only member of the Rhode Island delegation to write in support of the designation.

"This recognition is also indicative of the internationally renowned properties found all over Newport, which I believe should be recognized on a global scale with a World Heritage designation. This is an important first step in bringing about international

awareness of Newport's great history, which exemplified the architectural and cultural trends of the late 19th century. It also provides a powerful message that the Lively Experiment is still relevant, especially to today's emerging nations," Chafee continued.

Completed in 1852, Chateau-sur-Mer is a landmark of High Victorian architecture, furniture, wallpapers, ceramics and stenciling. Its grand scale and lavish parties ushered in the Gilded Age of Newport. Chateau-sur-Mer displays most of the major design trends of the last half of the 19th century. Built as an Italianate-style villa for China trade merchant William Shepard Wetmore, it was passed on to his son George Peabody Wetmore, who had a distinguished political career as Governor of Rhode Island and as a United States Senator. The house was purchased by the Preservation Society of Newport County in 1969.

Marble House was built between 1888 and 1892 for Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, a summer house, or "cottage", as Newporters called them in remembrance of the modest houses of the early 19th century. But Marble House was much more; it was a social and architectural landmark that set the pace for Newport's subsequent transformation from a quiet summer colony of wooden houses to the legendary resort of opulent stone palaces. The cost of the house was reported in contemporary press accounts to be \$11 million, of which \$7 million was spent on 500,000 cubic feet of marble. Upon its completion, Mr. Vanderbilt gave the house to his wife as a 39th birthday present. After their divorce and Mr. Vanderbilt's subsequent death, she reopened Marble House, and had a Chinese Tea House built on the seaside cliffs, where she hosted rallies to advocate for women's right to vote. The Preservation Society of Newport County acquired the house in 1963 from the Prince estate.

"I wish to commend both the Preservation Society of Newport County and Salve Regina University for their sustained preservation efforts of these two historic buildings. Their efforts have paid off, and both institutions should be commended for their ambitious restoration and enhancement initiatives to rehabilitate and preserve these properties," Chafee added.

As part of this distinction, federal funding and grants are available on a limited basis, as well as federal income tax incentives for donating easements and for rehabilitating income-generating historic buildings.

Chafee has been steadfast in his efforts to enhance Newport's stature as both a national and international historical location. He has successfully written letters of support for Save America's Treasures grants for properties cared for by the Preservation Society of Newport County. In addition, Chafee will co-host the 9th Annual U.S. National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites from April 19 - 23, 2006, in Newport. Further information can be found at:
http://www.icomos.org/usicomos/Symposium/SYMP06/2006_Symposium.htm.

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